Income poor, ICT poor?

A survey study on ICT access and difficulties of Flemish income poor people

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Income poor people are disadvantaged by the abolishment of physical services and counters

Digital divide/inequality research

stratification hypothesis

vs.

normalization hypothesis

In Belgium…

3-10%

lacks ICT access at home

10-20%

lacks ICT-skills

These percentages are significant higher among low income people

Brotcorne, P., & Mariën, I. (2020). *Barometer van de Digitale Inclusie*. https://e-inclusie.be/onderzoeken/2020-barometer-digitale-inclusie

Percentage among low income people…

3-10%

Lacks ICT access at home

10-20%

Lacks ICT-skills

20-40%

30-40%

Our conclusion may seem not suprising…

however, the abscence of figures…

may result in detrimental policy decisions.

Digitale overheid

Visie gebruiksvriendelijke digitale dienstverlening

De samenleving digitaliseert in snel tempo. Veel burgers worden geconfronteerd met deze digitaliserende maatschappij. Nu de Vlaamse overheid zichzelf als doel stelt om tegen 2020 alle administratieve transacties tussen overheid en burgers of lokale besturen en ondernemingen via digitale kanalen aan te bieden, met een maximale benadering vanuit een virtueel en digitaal loket, zijn serieuze inspanningen nodig om álle burgers op de kar te krijgen.

Diversiteit in burgers, diversiteit in aanpak

Bij alle processen van digitalisering moet rekening worden gehouden met de manier waarop verschillende burgers met digitale toepassingen omgaan. Elke burger is anders en heeft andere motieven om gebruik te maken van digitale dienstverlening. Sommigen vinden heel snel hun weg in het digitale landschap, andere doelgroepen ontbreekt het aan toegang, vaardigheden, motivatie, vertrouwen en een sociaal netwerk dat hen ondersteunt. Zij hebben hulp nodig om mee te kunnen in de online samenleving.

De Vlaamse overheid wil de toegankelijkheid van de nieuwe digitale diensten voor alle burgers nastreven.

Method and sample

People are considered as poor when they have a monthly OECD equivalent income ≤ €1250

PLOS ONE

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Development and psychometric properties of the Digital Difficulties Scale (DDS): An instrument to measure who is disadvantaged to fulfill basic needs by experiencing difficulties in using a smartphone or computer

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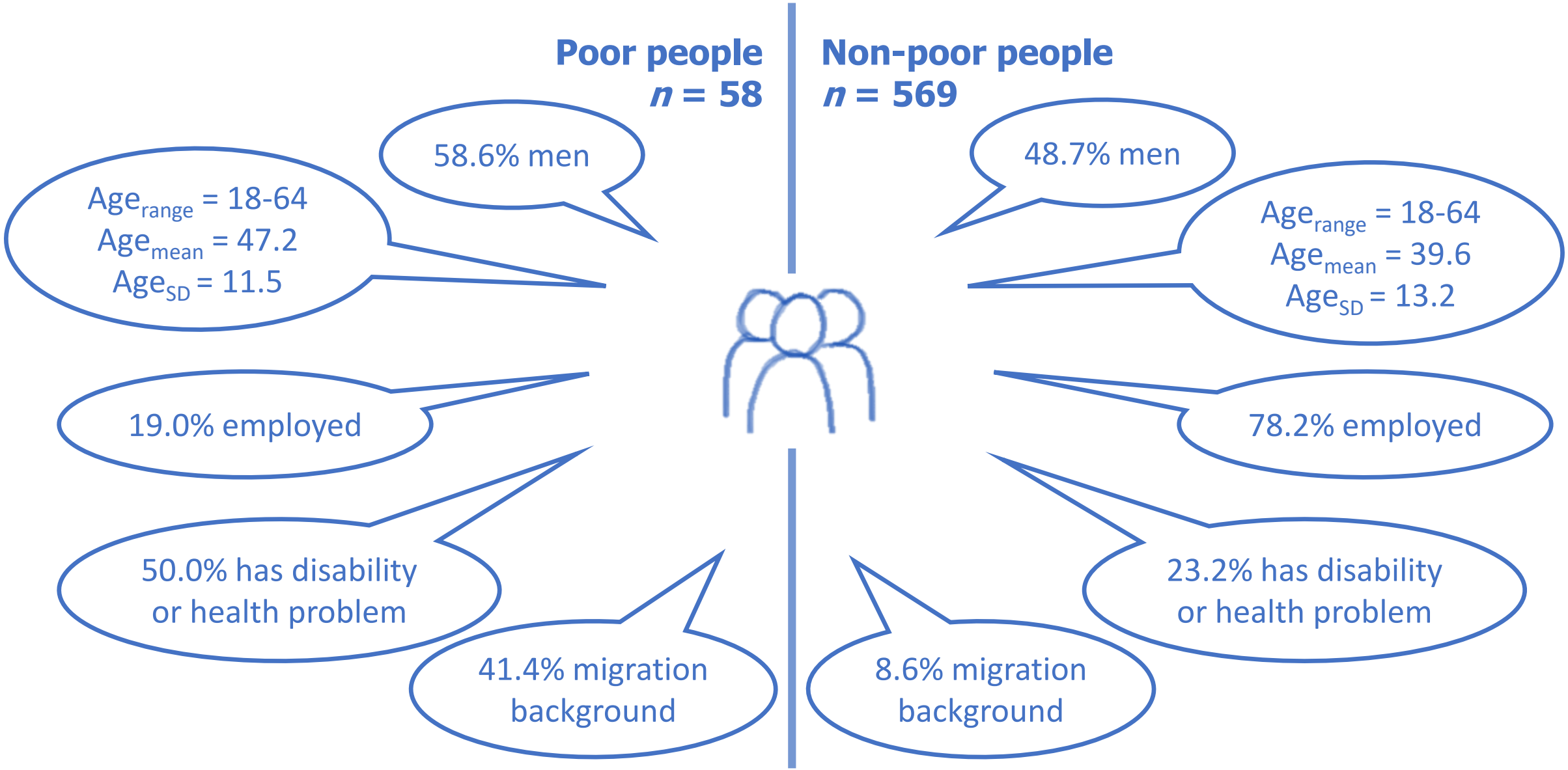
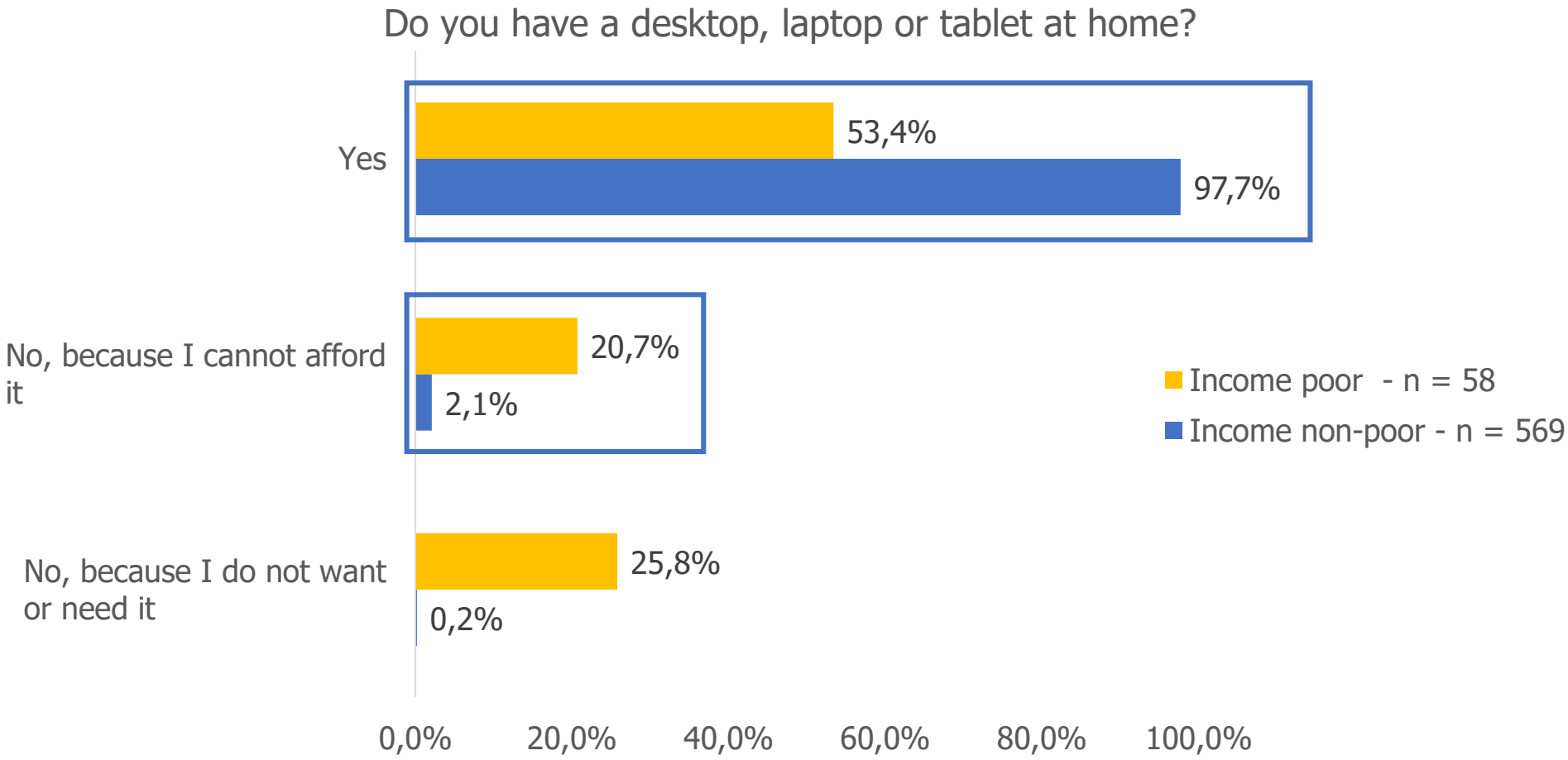
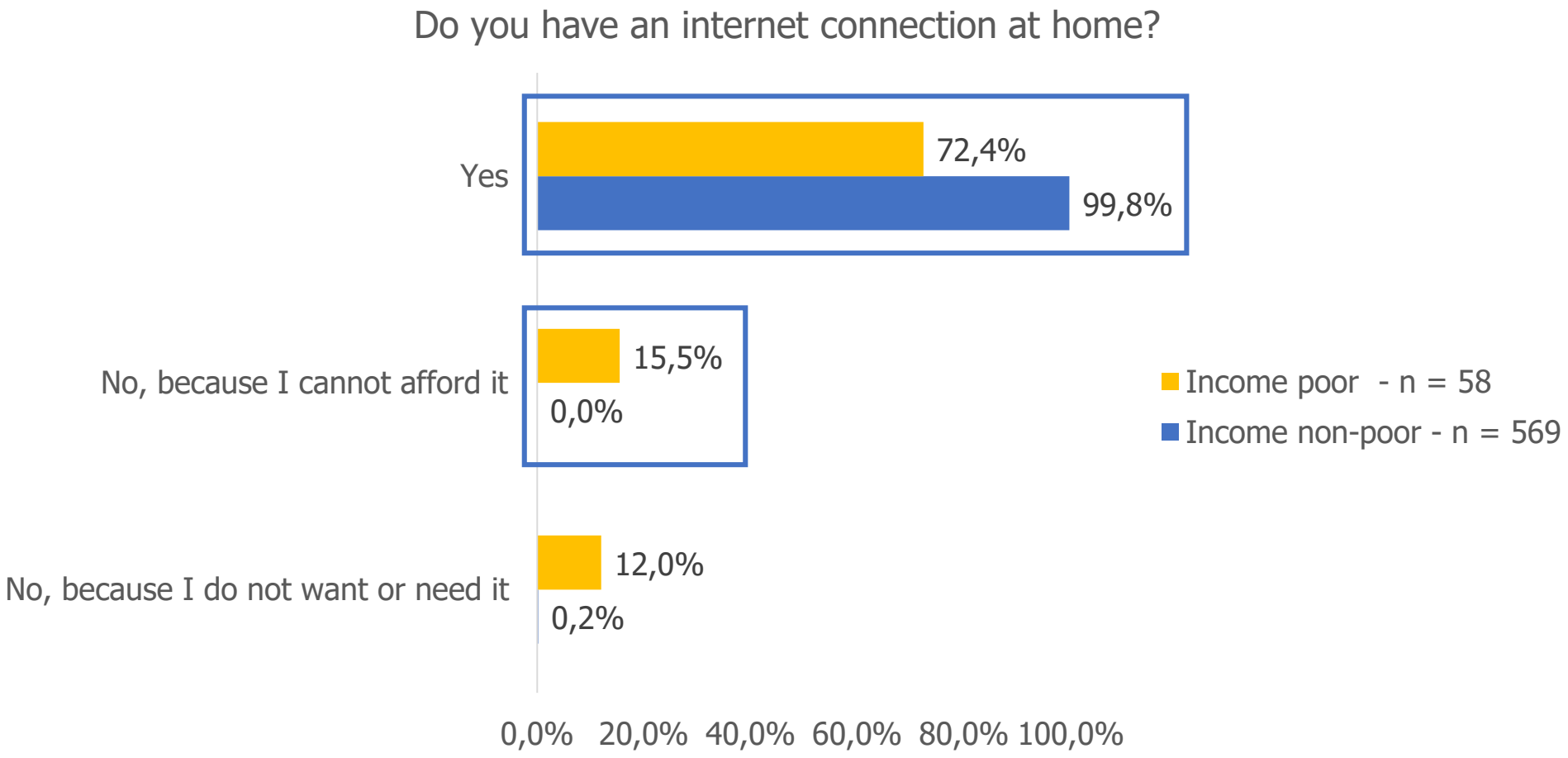
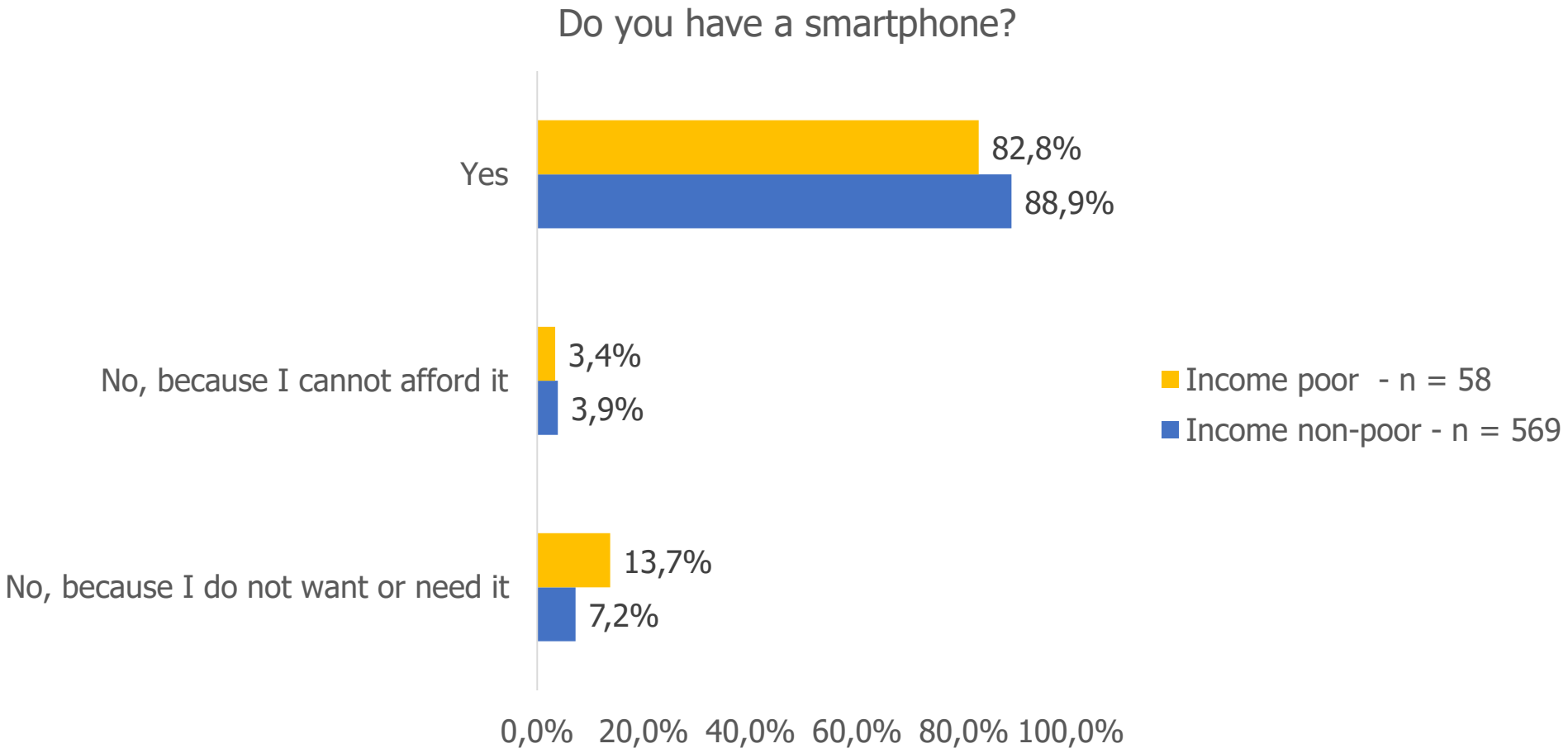
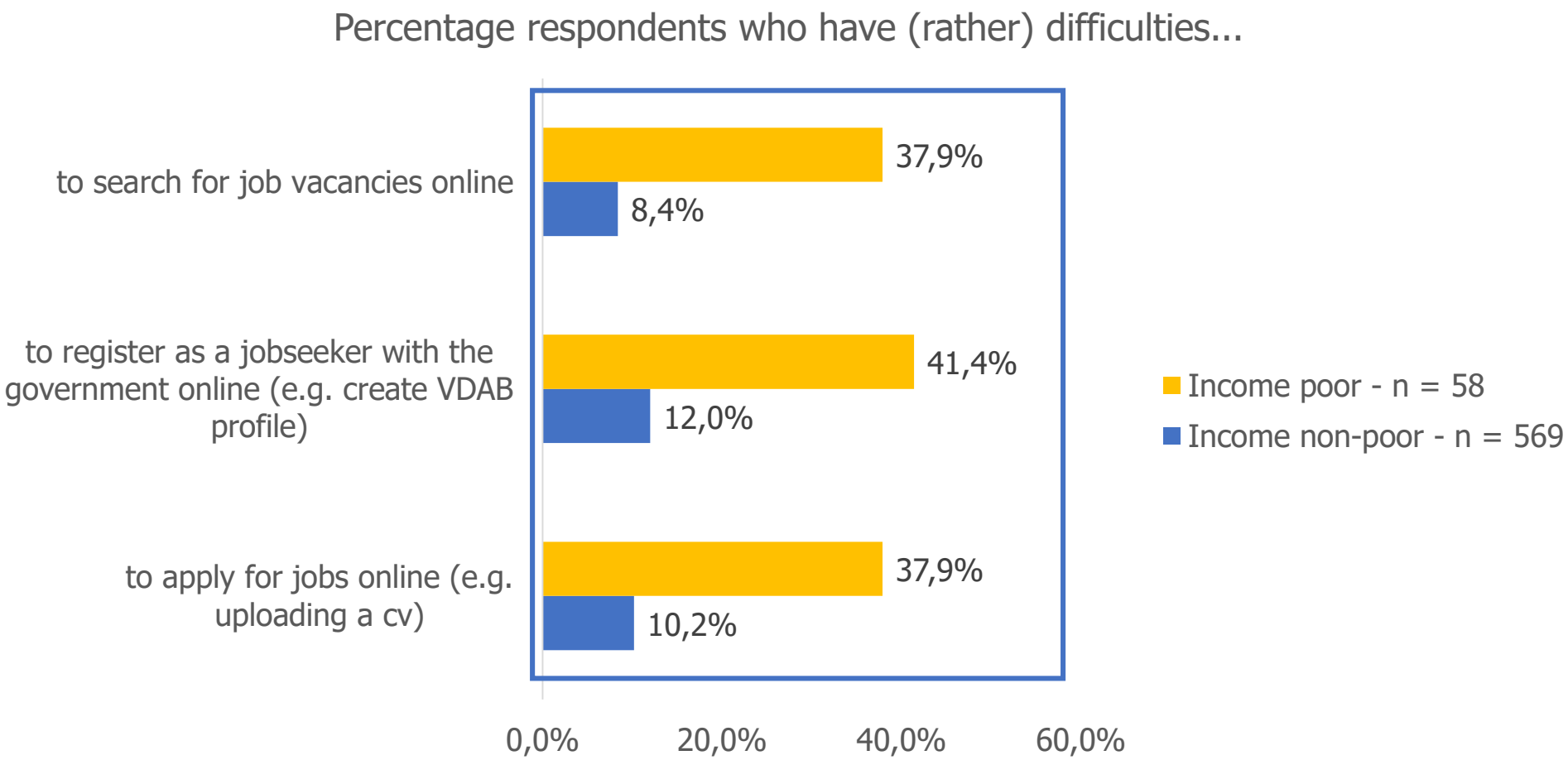

Poor people
n = 58
58.6% men
Age range = 18-64
Age mean = 47.2
Age SD = 11.5
19.0% employed
50.0% has disability or health problem
41.4% migration background
Non-poor people
n = 569
48.7% men
Age range = 18-64
Age mean = 39.6
Age SD = 13.2
78.2% employed
23.2% has disability or health problem
8.6% migration background

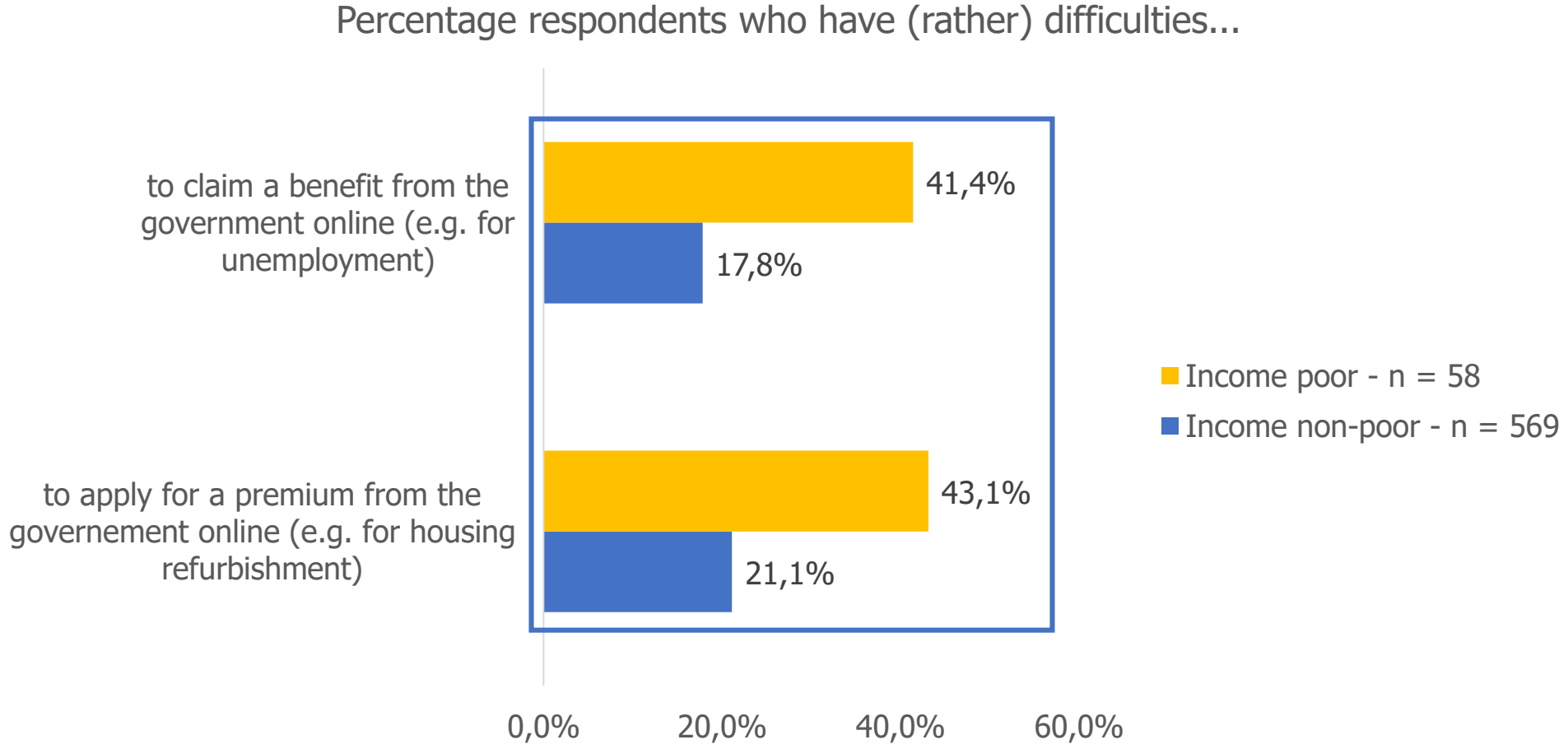
Results

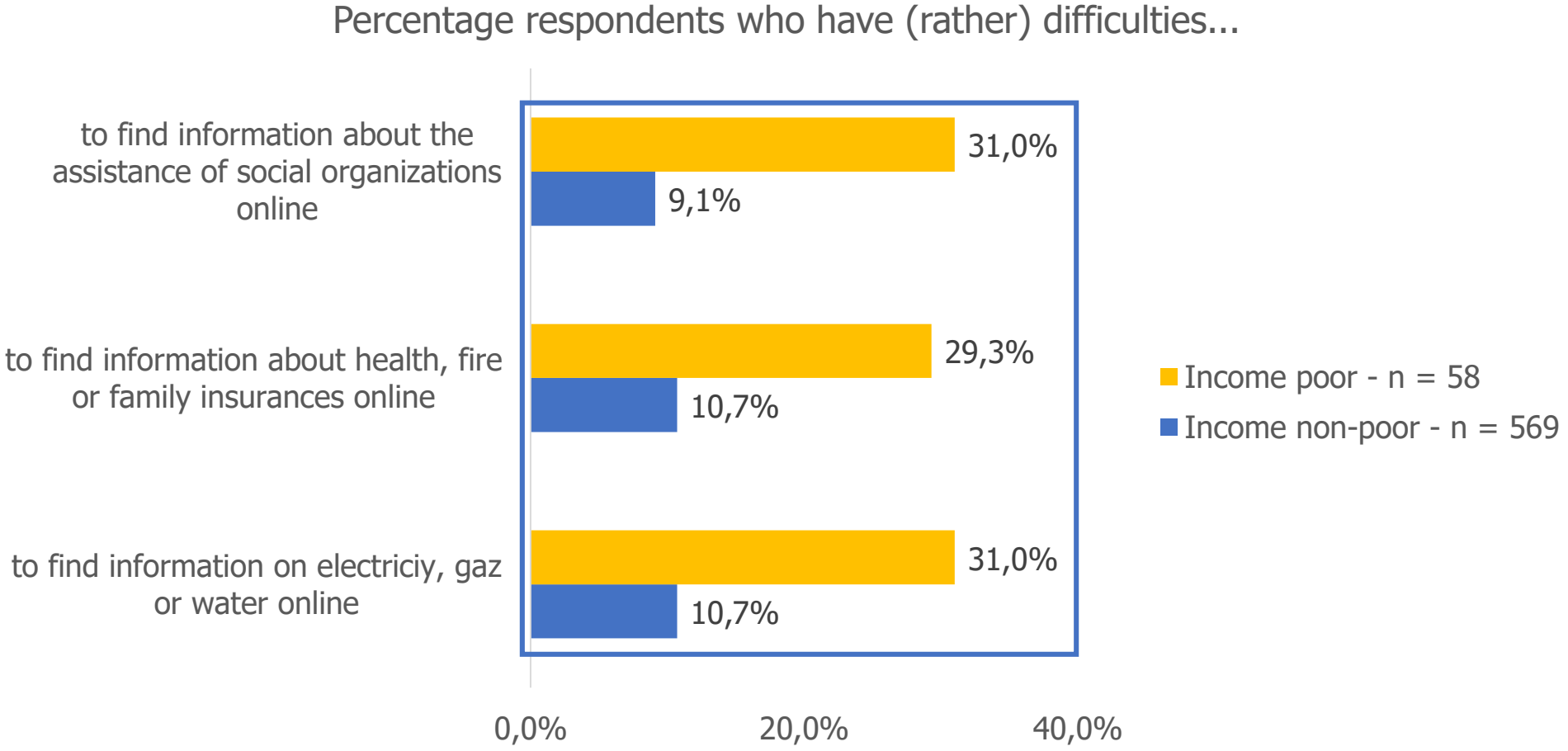

Do you have a desktop, laptop or tablet at home?
Yes
53,4%
97,7%
No, because I cannot afford it
20,7%
2,1%
No, because I do not want or need it
25,8%
0,2%
Income poor - n = 58
Income non-poor - n = 569
0,0%
20,0%
40,0%
60,0%
80,0%
100,0%


Do you have an internet connection at home?
Yes
72,4%
99,8%
No, because I cannot afford it
15,5%
0,0%
No, because I do not want or need it
12,0%
0,2%
Income poor - n = 58
Income non-poor - n = 569
0,0% 20,0% 40,0% 60,0% 80,0% 100,0%


Do you have a smartphone?
Yes
No, because I cannot afford it
No, because I do not want or need it
82,8%
88,9%
3,4%
3,9%
13,7%
7,2%
Income poor - n = 58
Income non-poor - n = 569
0,0%
20,0%
40,0%
60,0%
80,0%
100,0%


Percentage respondents who have (rather) difficulties...
to search for job vacancies online
37,9%
8,4%
to register as a jobseeker with the government online (e.g. create VDAB profile)
41,4%
12,0%
to apply for jobs online (e.g. uploading a cv)
37,9%
10,2%
0,0%
20,0%
40,0%
60,0%
Income poor - n = 58
Income non-poor - n = 569


Percentage respondents who have (rather) difficulties...
to claim a benefit from the government online (e.g. for unemployment)
41,4%
17,8%
to apply for a premium from the governement online (e.g. for housing refurbishment)
43,1%
21,1%
Income poor - n = 58
Income non-poor - n = 569
0,0%
20,0%
40,0%
60,0%


Percentage respondents who have (rather) difficulties...
to find information about the assistance of social organizations online
31,0%
9,1%
to find information about health, fire or family insurances online
29,3%
10,7%
to find information on electriciy, gaz or water online
31,0%
10,7%
0,0%
20,0%
40,0%
Income poor - n = 58
Income non-poor - n = 569

Limitations

- Convenience sampling strategy
- Self-report measures
- Presence of researcher when questionning income poor people
- Sample size of income poor people

Conclusion

- A significant amount of income poor people lack ICT access at home (by financial constraint)

- 30-40% of income poor people have difficulties to use the internet for basic needs, compared to 10-15% of income non-poor people

Implications

- Subsidy system for internet connection at home

- ICT devices at a social rate to income poor people and families

- Minimum of non-digital services and administrations

Thank you for your attendance!
Want to know more about our research?

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